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C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 000922

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/27/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [EAID](#) [MASS](#) [NP](#) [IN](#) [RS](#)

SUBJECT: INDIA SUSPENDS MILITARY PIPELINE TO NEPAL, WORRIES
ABOUT RUSSIA/CHINA STEPPING IN

REF: NEW DELHI 20680

Classified By: PolCouns Geoffrey Pyatt for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

1. (C) With NSA Narayanan unavailable until February 7, the Ambassador used a February 4 meeting with Foreign Secretary Saran to convey reftel points detailing our goals and strategy in Nepal. He also addressed these issues in broad brush during a pull aside with Foreign Minister Natwar Singh. Saran was grateful for the US approach, stating again his appreciation for the fact that Washington and New Delhi have stayed in synch since the crisis broke. Speaking in confidence, Saran described several new steps the GOI has taken to signal displeasure with the King's action, including suspension of military "supplies in the pipeline," postponement of a planned visit to Kathmandu by Army chief J.J. Singh, and a review of military training activities (although students currently in India will not be sent back). "We are trying to build pressure," the Foreign Secretary explained.

2. (C) Saran was highly concerned that China or Russia would exploit this opportunity to make up for any shortfall in military supplies from India, and sought US assistance to prevent that from happening. He was particularly worried about reports that the RNA chief had contacted Russia to provide MI-17 helicopters. "We just cannot accept that," Saran underlined, adding that the mere fact of the request was worrisome. Saran was also concerned by rumors that President Musharraf was reaching out to the King, fearing that this too could be part of an effort to take advantage of India's firm policy in order to cultivate influence with the Palace. The Ambassador noted that we have already weighed in with the Chinese, and promised to convey the Foreign Secretary's worries about other players.

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3. (C) Saran offered a brief update on reporting from the Indian team in Kathmandu, noting that the RNA has taken over patrols outside homes of detained politicians, and has confiscated cell phones from some. He concluded by asking that the US weigh in with Moscow and use its contacts with the RNA to reinforce India's message to the Army that "they need to lay off."
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